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AN

# HISTORICAL ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

GROTON, MASSACHUSETTS,

JULY 12, 1905,

ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE

**Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary**

OF

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE TOWN.

BY

SAMUEL ABBOTT GREEN

A NATIVE OF THE TOWN.

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With an Appendix

GROTON:

1905.

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TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
**The Early Settlers of Groton,**

TO WHOM IN MANY WAYS THE PRESENT INHABITANTS  
OWE SO MUCH, THESE PAGES ARE  
INSCRIBED.



## HISTORICAL ADDRESS.

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ON this interesting occasion we all miss the presence of one whose form and figure were familiar to every man, woman, and child in town; and only a few months ago we were all looking forward to the time when he would take a prominent part in these exercises of to-day. Some of us remember the Bi-centennial Celebration which took place a half-century ago, and a few of us now in this assembly were present at that gathering. We recall the grace and dignity with which he, the president of the day, performed the duties of his office, both in the meeting-house where the historical address was given, and in the tent where the after-dinner speeches were made. Whenever or wherever his services were needed, whether in the councils of the State or of the nation, they were always cheerfully rendered; and in this quiet village his aid and advice, often sought by his townsfolk, were always freely given. In many walks of life, both lofty and lowly, his removal will be keenly felt; but here among his old-time neighbors more than elsewhere, the loss is a personal one, and comes home to us all. We miss him now at this time more than words can tell. When death strikes such a man, who has led a blameless life, and whose bodily frame has become enfeebled by the infirmities of age, his departure is not a cause for sorrow; but rather it is an occasion for devout gratitude to Heaven and for heartfelt thanksgivings that he was spared to us during so many years. The noble example of such a one is as lasting as the countless ages of time, and is never lost, for the continuity of life keeps up the thread of connection. He died at an advanced age in the fulness of all his mental

and intellectual powers, which seemed to strengthen as the years rolled by. Truly he was the Grand Old Man of the Commonwealth! As long as the town of Groton shall have a municipal existence, the memory and traditions connected with the name of Boutwell will be counted among her richest treasures.

The story of this town has been told so many times, both in printed book and public address, that now I shall not repeat the tale. I might give a narrative of the trials and hardships, suffered equally by brave men and resolute women, during the first century of the settlement; I might tell how the town was attacked by the Indians and burnt, and how the inhabitants were driven away from their homes and compelled for a while to abandon the place; how on various occasions men were killed by the savages, families broken up, and children carried off into captivity; and how oftentimes from the failure of crops they were pinched by want; and how they endured other privations, — but a relation of these facts at this time would be as tedious as a twice-told tale. Instead of describing the sad and dreadful experiences of the early settlers, and the destruction of their homes by fire and hideous ruin, I shall confine myself to other topics, and speak of some of the conditions of their day, bringing the account down to a later period, and touching on a few of the more important events in our local history.

In early Colonial days a town did not become a municipal corporation by formal vote of the General Court, with power to act as one person, but a grant of land, sometimes containing many thousand acres, was made to a body of men under certain conditions, which was practically a *quasi* form of incorporation. The most important of these conditions was the speedy settlement of a Godly minister, and often another condition was that those persons who received land should build houses thereon within a stated period of time. Sometimes a board of selectmen was named by the Legislature, who should look after the prudential affairs of the town until their successors were chosen. In those days this course was substantially the only formality needed in order

to give local self-government to a new community. The term "prudential affairs" was a convenient expression, intended to cover anything required by a town which prudence would dictate.

In the early records of the Colony the proceedings of the General Court, as a rule, were not dated day by day, — though there are many exceptions, — but the beginning of the session is always given, and occasionally the days of the month are entered. These dates in the printed edition of the Records are frequently carried along without authority, sometimes covering a period of several days, or even a week or more; and for this reason often it is impossible to tell the exact date of any particular legislation when there are no contemporaneous documents on file which bear on the subject. In some instances papers are found among the State Archives or elsewhere, which fix the date of such legislation that is wanting in the official records.

For these reasons it is impossible to tell to a dot or a day, with entire certainty, when the town of Groton began its municipal life or official existence, — or, in other words, when it was "incorporated," as the modern expression is. Without any doubt the date was near the end of May, 1655, Old Style. It must have been after May 23, as on that day the General Court began its session; and it was before May 29, when the next entry in the records appears. Fortunately there is still preserved among the manuscripts of the New-England Historic Genealogical Society a contemporary record of the action of the General Court in regard to the matter. This interesting old paper, officially attested by Edward Rawson, Secretary of the Colony, and by William Torrey, Clerk of the Deputies, was given to that Society by the late Charles Woolley, for many years an honored resident of Groton. This document was signed on May 25, the day when the Assistants, or Magistrates as they are often called, granted the petition, and apparently at the same time the House of Deputies took concurrent action. At that period the Assistants formed the body of law-makers which is known to-day as the State Senate; and at that time the

House of Deputies corresponded to the present House of Representatives.

It may be proper to add that the Groton Historical Society owns a contemporaneous copy of the record made near the time of the Grant by Edward Rawson, Secretary of the Colony, which is dated May 23, 1655. It was found among the papers of the late John Boynton, a former town-clerk of Groton, and may have been sent, soon after the settlement of the town, to the selectmen for their information and guidance. Perhaps the Secretary took the first day of the General Court, as in England before April 8, 1793, all laws passed at a session of Parliament went into effect from the first day, unless there was some enactment to the contrary.

But whatever the date, be it a few days more or less, the substance is always of greater importance than the shadow; so it is of less moment to learn the exact time of the order than it is to know that the town has now reached the ripe old age of two centuries and a half, and that she wears the dignity of her increasing years like a crown of glory.

Besides Groton the only two other towns established in the year 1655 by the Colony of Massachusetts Bay were Billerica and Chelmsford; and singularly enough all three were contiguous townships, all lying in the same county, and all three "incorporated" within a very few days of each other. It should be borne in mind that originally the town of Westford was a part of the territory of Chelmsford. Why these three adjoining towns were thus created at this particular time may not have been a mere coincidence. It may have been the result of a certain condition of political *ins* and *outs* at that early period of Colonial history which now cannot be explained.

The Charter, duly given by Charles I., was abrogated by the English courts in the summer of 1684. The action was considered by the Colonists as little short of a gross outrage, and caused much confusion in public affairs as well as hard feeling among the people. Says Palfrey, in his "History of New England" (IV. 5), "The charter of Massachusetts, the only unquestionable title of her citizens to any rights,

proprietary, social, or political, had been vacated by regular process in the English courts." It was vacated by a decree in Chancery, on June 21, 1684, which was confirmed on October 23 of the same year. On May 25, 1686, Joseph Dudley, a native of Roxbury, under a commission from King James II. became President of New England, with jurisdiction over the whole region. This office he held for seven months, until December 30, when Edmund Andros became Governor of New England, appointed by James II. He proved to be a highly arbitrary officer, and was deposed by a revolution of the people, on April 18, 1689. Andros was followed by Simon Bradstreet, who was Governor from May 24, 1689, to May 14, 1692. He was the grandfather of Dudley Bradstreet, an early minister of this town, which gives an additional interest to his name at this time. During this period another Charter, signed by William and Mary, on October 7, 1691, and now known as the Second Charter, became operative. Under this instrument the Colony was made a Province, which is a lower grade of political existence, as it has fewer privileges and more restrictions as to the rights of the people. From June, 1684, when the First Charter was vacated, till May, 1692, when the Second Charter went into operation, the time is generally spoken of as the Inter-Charter period, and is an exceptional one in the history of Massachusetts and New England.

The first settlers of the town came here less than one generation after the Colonial Charter of Massachusetts Bay was granted by Charles I. They represented a rugged race, willing to undergo hardships in daily life, and expecting to meet danger from many sources. Under adverse conditions they pushed into the wilderness and made their homes in a region little known to the white man. They were a brave band, and took their trials and troubles with a readiness worthy of all praise. The new township lay on the frontiers, and all beyond was a desolate wild. It stood on the outer edge of civilization, and for a time served as a barrier against Indian attacks on the inlying settlements. The lot of a frontiersman, even under favorable conditions, is never a happy one,



but at that period, particularly when cut off from neighbors and deprived of all social and commercial intercourse with other towns, and in an age when newspapers and postal privileges were unknown, his lot was indeed hard. In after-years this experience told on the settlers to their credit and benefit, and made the bold character that cropped out in later generations when there was need of such stuff. The laws of heredity are not well enough known for us to trace closely *cause and effect*; but the lives led by the early pioneers of the Colony had their fruitage in the wars of the next century. These laws work in a subtle and mysterious way and cannot be defined, but the hardships of one generation toughen the fibre of the next. Given a strong body and a high standard of morality, and the offspring will show the inherited traits. Every farmer in this town knows that a strain of blood and breed will tell on his domestic stock. As flowers, by a process not revealed to us, select the tint of delicate colors from the swampy bogs of nature, so the toils of life weave the warp and the woof which make up noble character. "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together."

It was once wittily said by a writer, — so distinguished in his day that I hardly know whether to speak of him as a poet or a physician, but whom all will recognize as the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, — that a man's education begins a hundred years before he is born. I am almost tempted to add that even then he is putting on only the finishing touches of his training. A man is a composite being, both in body and soul, with a long line of ancestry whose beginnings it is impossible to trace; and every succeeding generation only helps to foster and weld together the various and innumerable qualities which make up his own personality, though they be modified by countless circumstances that form his later education, and for which he alone is responsible.

The first comers to Massachusetts brought from their English homes a love of personal freedom and liberty. For generations this feeling had not been encouraged there by the royal authorities; and its growth, hampered by many obstacles, had been slow. These settlers were a hard-working



set and a God-fearing people, and of the right stock to found a nation. Here the new conditions enabled them to give free scope to their actions, and the natural drift of events was all toward individual independence in its widest sense. There was no law against conventicles or non-conformists, and for that period of time there was great liberality of sentiment on the part of the Colonists. For centuries the microbic atoms of independence had been kept alive in England, and from one generation to another they handed down the germs which developed in the new world, and bore fruit in the American Revolution. From the time of King John, who, on June 15, 1215, signed the Great Charter of the Liberties of England, the recognition of human rights was advancing in the mother country slowly but steadily; and the new settlers, infected with similar ideas, brought with them the spirit of these political principles. The development of broad views was gradual, but on every advance the wheels were blocked behind, and the gain was held. Each separate step thus taken led finally to the Declaration of Independence, which was the culmination of political freedom. Based on this instrument, and following it closely both in spirit and in point of time, was the written Constitution of the United States, which has served as a model for so many different governments.

Less than one generation passed between the time when the Charter of Charles I. was given to the Colony of Massachusetts Bay and the date when the grant of Groton Plantation was made by the General Court. The Charter was given on March 4, 1628-9, and the grant of the town was made in May, 1655, — the interval being a little more than twenty-six years. At that period scarcely anything was known about the geography of the region, and the Charter gave to the Governor and other representatives of the Massachusetts Company, on certain conditions, all the territory lying between an easterly and westerly line running three miles north of any part of the Merrimack River and extending from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific, and a similar parallel line running three miles south of any part of the Charles River. Without attempting to trace in detail, from the time of the Cabots to

the days of the Charter, the continuity of the English title to this transcontinental strip of territory, it is enough to know that the precedents and usages of that period gave to Great Britain, in theory at least, undisputed sway over the region, and forged every link in the chain of authority and sovereignty.

At the time of the Charter it was incorrectly supposed that America was a narrow strip of land, — perhaps an arm of the continent of Asia, — and that the distance across from ocean to ocean was comparatively short. It was then known that the Isthmus of Darien was narrow, and it was therefore thought that the whole continent also was narrow. New England was a region about which little was known beyond slight examinations made from the coast line. The rivers were unexplored, and all knowledge concerning them was confined to the neighborhood of the places where they emptied into the sea. The early navigators thought that the general course of the Merrimack was easterly and westerly, as it runs in that direction near the mouth; and their error was perpetuated inferentially by the words of the Charter. By later explorations this strip of territory has since been lengthened out into a belt three thousand miles long, and stretches across the whole width of a continent. The cities of Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Detroit, and Milwaukee all lie within this zone, on territory that once belonged to the Massachusetts Company, according to the Charter granted by King Charles.

The general course of the Merrimack, as well as its source, soon became known to the early settlers on the coast. The northern boundary of the original grant to the Colony of Massachusetts Bay was established under a misapprehension; and this ignorance of the topography of the country on the part of the English authorities afterward gave rise to considerable controversy between the adjoining Provinces of Massachusetts and New Hampshire. So long as the territory in question remained unsettled, the dispute was a matter of little practical importance; but after a while it assumed grave proportions and led to much confusion. Grants made by one Province clashed with those made by the other; and

there was no ready tribunal to decide the claims of the two parties. Towns were chartered by Massachusetts in territory claimed by New Hampshire; and this action was the cause of bitter feeling and provoking legislation. Massachusetts contended for the tract of land "nominated in the bond," which would carry the jurisdictional line fifty miles northward, into the very heart of New Hampshire; and, on the other hand, that Province strenuously opposed this view of the case, and claimed that the line should run, east and west, three miles north of the mouth of the Merrimack River. In order to settle these conflicting claims, a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the subject and establish the contested line. The Commissioners were selected from the councillors of the Provinces of New York, New Jersey, Nova Scotia, and Rhode Island, — men supposed to be free from any local prejudices in the matter, and impartial in their feelings; and without doubt they were such. The board, as appointed under the Great Seal, consisted of nineteen members, although only seven served in their capacity as Commissioners. They met at Hampton, New Hampshire, on August 1, 1737; and for mutual convenience the Legislative Assemblies of the two Provinces met in the same neighborhood, — the Assembly of New Hampshire at Hampton Falls, and that of Massachusetts at Salisbury, places only five miles apart. This was done in order that the claims of each side might be considered with greater despatch than they otherwise would receive. The General Court of Massachusetts met at Salisbury, in the First Parish Meeting-house, on August 10, 1737, and continued to hold its sessions in that town until October 20, inclusive, though with several adjournments, of which one was for thirty-five days. The printed journal of the House of Representatives, during this period, gives the proceedings of that body, which contain much in regard to the controversy besides the ordinary business of legislation. Many years previously the two Provinces had been united so far as to have the same governor, — at this time Jonathan Belcher, — but each Province had its own legislative body and code of laws.

The Commissioners heard both sides of the question, and agreed upon an award in alternative, leaving to the king the interpretation of the charters given respectively by Charles I. and William and Mary. Under one interpretation the decision was in favor of Massachusetts, and under the other in favor of New Hampshire; and at the same time each party was allowed six weeks to file objections. Neither side, however, was satisfied with this indirect decision; and the whole matter was then taken to the king in council. Massachusetts claimed that the Merrimack River began at the confluence of the Winnepesaukee and the Pemigewasset Rivers, and that the northern boundary of the Province should run, east and west, three miles north of this point. On the other hand, New Hampshire claimed that the intention of the Charter was to establish a northern boundary on a line, running east and west, three miles north of the mouth of the Merrimack River. In this controversy Massachusetts seems to have based her claim on the letter of the contract, while New Hampshire based hers on the spirit of the contract.

The strongest argument in favor of Massachusetts is the fact that she had always considered the disputed territory as belonging to her jurisdiction; and before this period she had chartered twenty-four towns lying within the limits of the tract. These several settlements all looked to her for protection, and naturally sympathized with her during the controversy. As just stated, neither was satisfied with the verdict of the Royal Commissioners, and both sides appealed from their judgment. The matter was then taken to England for a decision, which was given by the king, on March 4, 1739-40. His judgment was final, and in favor of New Hampshire. It gave to that Province not only all the territory in dispute, but a strip of land fourteen miles in width lying along her southern border, — mostly west of the Merrimack, — which she had never claimed. This strip was the tract of land between the line running east and west three miles north of the southernmost trend of the river, and a similar line three miles north of its mouth. By this decision many townships were taken from Massachusetts and given to New Hampshire.

The settlement of this disputed question was undoubtedly a great public benefit, but at the time it caused a good deal of hard feeling. The new line was established by surveyors officially in the spring of 1741.

In regard to the divisional line between the two Provinces lying east of the Merrimack, there was much less uncertainty, as, in a general way, it followed the bend of the river, and for that reason there was much less controversy over the jurisdiction. Many of you, doubtless, have noticed on a map the tier of towns which fringe the north bank of the Merrimack, between the city of Lowell and the mouth of the river; and, perhaps, you have wondered why those places, which from a geographical point of view belong to the State of New Hampshire, should come now within the limits of Massachusetts. The explanation of this seeming incongruity goes back to the date of the first Charter, now more than two hundred and seventy-five years ago.

I have given an account of this dispute in some detail as the town of Groton was a party to the controversy and took a deep interest in the result. It was by this decision of the king that the town lost all that portion of its territory which lies now within the limits of the city of Nashua; but it did not suffer nearly so much as our neighbor, the town of Dunstable, suffered by the same decision. At that time she received a staggering blow, and her loss, indeed, was a grievous one. Originally she was a large township containing 128,000 acres of land, situated on both sides of the Merrimack; and she was so cut in two by the running of the new line that by far the larger part of her territory came within the jurisdiction of New Hampshire. Even the meeting-house and the burying-ground, both so closely and dearly connected with the early life of our people, were separated from that portion of the town still remaining in Massachusetts; and this fact added not a little to the animosity felt by the inhabitants when the disputed question was settled. It is no exaggeration to say that throughout the old township and all along the line of the borders from the Merrimack to the Connecticut, the feelings and sympathies were wholly with Massachusetts.



Thus cut in twain, there were two adjoining towns bearing the same name, the one in Massachusetts, and the other in New Hampshire; and thus they remained for nearly a century. This similarity of designation was the source of considerable confusion which lasted until the New Hampshire town, on January 1, 1837, took the name of Nashua, after the river from which its prosperity largely is derived.

By the same decision of the king our other adjoining neighbor, Townsend, — for at that time Pepperell had not as yet taken on a separate municipal existence, — was deprived of more than one quarter of her territory; and the present towns of Brookline, Mason, and New Ipswich in New Hampshire now are reaping the benefit of what she then lost.

Enough of the original Groton Plantation, however, was left to furnish other towns and parts of towns with ample material for their territory. On November 26, 1742, the west parish of Groton was set off as a precinct. It comprised all that part of the town lying on the west side of the Nashua River, north of the old road leading from Groton to Townsend, and now known as Pepperell. Its incorporation as a parish or precinct allowed the inhabitants to manage their own ecclesiastical affairs, while in all other matters they continued to act with the parent town. Its partial separation gave them the benefit of a settled minister in their neighborhood, which in those days was considered of great importance.

It is an interesting fact to note that in early times the main reason given in the petitions for dividing towns was the long distance to the meeting-house, by which the inhabitants were prevented from hearing the stated preaching of the gospel. At the present day I do not think that this argument is ever urged by those who favor the division of a township.

On April 12, 1753, when the Act was signed by the Governor, the west parish of Groton was made a district, — the second step toward its final and complete separation from the mother town. At this period the Crown authorities were jealous of the growth of the popular party in the House of Representatives, and for that reason they frowned on every attempt to increase the number of its members. This fact

had some connection with the tendency, which began to crop out during Governor Shirley's administration, to form districts instead of towns, thereby withholding their representation. At this date the west parish, under its changed political conditions, took the name of Pepperrell, and was vested with still broader powers. It was so called after Sir William Pepperrell, who had successfully commanded the New England troops against Louisburg; and the name was suggested, doubtless, by the Reverend Joseph Emerson, the first settled minister of the parish. He had accompanied that famous expedition in the capacity of chaplain, only the year before he had received a call for his settlement, and the associations with the commander were fresh in his memory. The hero of the capture of Louisburg always wrote his surname with a double "r"; and for many years the district followed that custom, and spelled the name with two "r's," but gradually the town dropped one of these letters. It was near the beginning of the nineteenth century that the present orthographic form of the word became general.

In the session of the General Court which met at Watertown, on July 19, 1775, Pepperrell was represented by a member, and at that time practically acquired the rights and privileges of a town without any special act of incorporation. Other similar districts were likewise represented, in accordance with the precept calling that body together, and thus they obtained municipal rights without the usual formality. The precedent seems to have been set by the First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, which met in the autumn of 1774, and was made up of delegates from the districts as well as from the towns. It was a revolutionary step taken outside of the law; and the informality led to a general Act, passed on August 23, 1775, which legalized the change.

Shirley, unlike Pepperrell, was never incorporated as a precinct, but was set off as a district on January 5, 1753, three months before Pepperrell was set off as one. In the Act of Incorporation the name was left blank,—as it was previously in the case of Harvard, and soon afterward in that of Pepperrell,—and "Shirley" was filled in at the time of its

engrossment. It was so named after William Shirley, the Governor of the Province at that period. It never was incorporated specifically as a town, but became one by a general Act of the Legislature, passed on August 23, 1775. While a district it was represented in the session of the General Court which met at Watertown, on July 19, 1775, as well as represented in the First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, and thus tacitly acquired the dignity of a town, which was afterward confirmed by the Act, just mentioned.

These two townships, Pepperell and Shirley, were the first settlements to swarm from the original Plantation. With the benediction of the mother they left the parent hive, and on all occasions have proved to be dutiful daughters in whom the old town has always taken a deep pride. In former years, before the days of railroads, these two towns were closely identified with Groton, and the social intercourse between them was very intimate. If the families of the three towns were not akin to one another, in a certain sense they were neighbors.

The latest legislation connected with the dismemberment of the original grant, — and perhaps the last for many years to come, — is the Act of February 14, 1871, by which the town of Ayer was incorporated. This enactment took from Groton a large section of territory lying near its southern borders, and from Shirley all that part of the town on the easterly side of the Nashua River which was annexed to it from Groton, on February 6, 1798.

Thus has the old Groton Plantation, during a period of two hundred and fifty years, been hewn and hacked down to less than one half of its original dimensions. Formerly it contained 40,960 acres, while now the amount of taxable land within the town is 19,850 acres. It has furnished, substantially, the entire territory of Pepperell, Shirley, and Ayer, more than one half of Dunstable, and has contributed more or less to form five other towns, — namely, Harvard, Littleton, and Westford, in Massachusetts, besides Nashua and Hollis, in New Hampshire.

The early settlers of Groton, like all other persons of that period of time or of any period, had their limitations. They



were lovers of political freedom, and they gave the largest liberty to all, — so far as it related to their physical condition ; but in matters of religious belief it was quite otherwise. With them it was an accepted tradition, — perhaps with us not entirely outgrown, — that persons who held a different faith from themselves were likely to have a lower standard of morality. They saw things by a dim light, they saw “ through a glass darkly.” They beheld theological objects by the help of dipped candles, and they interpreted religion and its relations to life accordingly. We living two hundred and fifty years later can bring to bear the electric light of science and modern discovery. We have a great advantage over what they had, and let us use it fairly. Let us be just to them, as we hope for justice from those who will follow us. Let us remember that the standards of daily life change from one century to another. Perhaps in future generations, when we are judged, the verdict of posterity will be against us rather than against the early comers. More has been given to us than was given to them, and we shall be held responsible in a correspondingly larger measure. It is not the number of talents with which we have been entrusted that will tell in our favor, but the sacred use we make of them. In deciding this question, two centuries and a half hence, I am by no means sure of the judgment that history will render. Do we as a nation give all men a square deal? The author of the Golden Rule was color-blind, and in its application he made no difference between the various races of mankind. This rule applied to the black man equally with the white man. Do we now give our African brother a fair chance? It is enough for us to try to do right, and let the consequences be what they will. “ Hew up to the chalk line, and let the chips fly where they may,” once said Wendell Phillips. We hear much nowadays about the simple life, but that was the life lived by the settlers, and taught to their children, both by precept and example. Austere in their belief, they practised those homely virtues which lie at the base of all civilization ; and we of to-day owe much to their memory. They prayed for the wisdom that cometh from above, and

for the righteousness that exalteth a nation; and they tried to square their conduct by their creed.

The early settlers were a plain folk, and they knew little of the pride and pomposity of later times. To sum up briefly their social qualities, I should say that they were neighborly to a superlative degree, which means much in country life. They looked after the welfare of their neighbors who were not so well off in this world's goods as they themselves, they watched with them when they were sick, and sympathized with them when death came into their families. In cold weather they hauled wood for the widows, and cut it up and split it for them; and when a beef "crittur" or a hog was killed, no one went hungry. When a man met with an accident and had a leg broken, the neighbors saw that his crops were gathered, and that all needful work was done; and after a heavy snow-storm in winter, they turned to and broke out the roads and private ways with sleds drawn by many yoke of oxen belonging in the district. Happily all this order of things is not yet a lost art, but in former times the custom was more thoroughly observed, and spread over a much wider region than now prevails. When help was needed in private households, they never asked, like the lawyer of old, "And who is my neighbor?" They always stretched out their hands to the poor, and they reached forth their hands to the needy.

To us it seems almost pathetic, certainly amusing, to see how closely they connected their daily life with the affairs of the church. As a specimen I will give an instance found in the note-book of the Reverend John Fiske, of Chelmsford. It seems that James Parker, James Fiske, and John Nutting wished to remove from Chelmsford and take up their abode in this town. The subject of their removal was brought before the church there in the autumn of 1661, when they desired the "loving leave" of their brethren so to do, as well as prayers that the blessing of God might accompany them to their new homes. The meeting was held on November 9, 1661, when some discussion took place and considerable feeling was shown. Mr. Fiske, the pastor, shrewdly declined to commit himself in the matter; or, according to the record,

declined to speak on the question "one way or the other, but desired that the brethren might manifest themselves." At the conference one brother said that there was no necessity for the removal, and hoped that the three members would give up their intention to remove, and would remain in Chelmsford. Reading between the lines it seems as if this town had invited the three men to settle here; and Brother Parker speaking for them ("in the plural number") said that God's hand was to be seen in the whole movement. The same hand which brought them to Chelmsford now pointed to Groton. Apparently the meeting was a protracted one, and "scarce a man in the Church but presently said the grounds, the grounds." This was another form of calling for the question, — in other words, for the reasons of the removal, whether valid or not. While the decision of the conference is not given in exact language, inferentially it was in favor of their going, — as they were here in December, 1662. James Parker was a deacon of the Chelmsford church; and perhaps there had been some slight disagreement between him and a few of the other members. Evidently he was one of the pillars of the body at Chelmsford; and at once he became a deacon at Groton. To us now it is amusing to see what a commotion in the church was raised because these three families purposed to remove to another town. "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth." Fortunately for this town James Parker, James Fiske, and John Nutting with their households came hither to live, where they all became useful and influential citizens far above the average. In his day James Parker was the most prominent man in Groton, filling many civil and military positions; the next year after coming James Fiske was chosen selectman, and later town-clerk; and John Nutting was appointed surveyor of highways. There are in this audience, doubtless, at the present moment many descendants of these three pioneers who had so many obstacles thrown in their way before taking up their abode here. If these families had not removed hither at that early period, perhaps their descendants now would be celebrating anniversaries elsewhere rather than here, and might never have known

what they lost by the change in their respective birthplaces. Without being able to call them by name or to identify them in any way, to all such I offer the greetings of this gathering on the good judgment shown by their ancestors.

This town took its name from Groton, Co. Suffolk, England, which was the native place of Deane Winthrop, one of the original petitioners for Groton Plantation. His name stands at the head of the list of selectmen appointed in 1655 by the General Court; and to-day we should give him the title of Chairman of the Board. He was a son of John Winthrop who came to New England in 1630 as Governor of Massachusetts; and it was in compliment to him that the name of his birthplace was given to the town. Without much doubt he was a resident here for a few years; and in this opinion I am supported by a distinguished member of that family, now deceased, who some time ago wrote me as follows:

BOSTON, 27 February, 1878.

MY DEAR DR. GREEN, — It would give me real pleasure to aid you in establishing the relations of Deane Winthrop to the Town of Groton in Massachusetts. But there are only three or four letters of Deane's among the family papers in my possession, and not one of them is dated Groton. Nor can I find in any of the family papers a distinct reference to his residence there.

There are, however, two brief notes of his, both dated "the 16 of December, 1662," which I cannot help thinking may have been written at Groton. One of them is addressed to his brother John, the Governor of Connecticut, who was then in London, on business connected with the Charter of Connecticut. In this note, Deane says as follows: —

"I have some thoughts of removing from the place that I now live in, into your Colony, if I could lit of a convenient place. The place that I now live in is too little for me, my children now growing up."

We know that Deane Winthrop was at the head of the first Board of Selectmen of Groton a few years earlier, and that he went to reside at Pullen Point, now called Winthrop, not many years after.

I am strongly inclined to think with you that this note of December, 1662, was written at Groton.

Yours very truly,

SAMUEL A. GREEN, M. D.

ROBT. C. WINTHROP.

During my boyhood I always had a strong desire to visit Groton in England, which gave its name to this town and indirectly to six other towns in the United States. Strictly speaking, it is not a town, but a parish; and there are technical distinctions between the two. More than fifty years ago I was staying in London, and as a stranger in that great metropolis, even after many inquiries I found much difficulty in learning the best way to reach the little village. All my previous knowledge in regard to the place was limited to the fact that it lay in the county of Suffolk, near its southern border. After a somewhat close study of a Railway Guide, I left London by rail for Sudbury, which is the only town of considerable size in the immediate neighborhood of Groton. After changing trains at a railway junction, of which the name has long since faded from my memory, I found myself in a carriage alone with a fellow-passenger, who was both courteous and communicative, and thoroughly acquainted with the country through which we were passing. On telling him the purpose of my visit, he seemed to be much interested, and told me in return that he was very familiar with the parish of Groton; and he had many questions to ask about our good old town, which I was both able and glad to answer. It soon turned out that my hitherto unknown friend was Sir Henry E. Austen, of Chelsworth, Hadleigh, who, on reaching Sudbury, gave me a note of introduction to Richard Almack, Esq., of Long Melford, which I used a day or two afterward with excellent results. From Sudbury I drove in a dog-cart to Boxford, where I tarried over night at the White Horse Inn, and in the morning walked over to Groton, less than a mile distant. This place,—the object of my pilgrimage,—I found to be a typical English village of the olden time, very small both in territory and population, and utterly unlike any of its American namesakes. Its history goes back many generations, even to a period before Domesday Book, which was ordered by William the Conqueror more than eight hundred years ago, and which registers a survey of the lands of England made at that early date. The text is in Latin, and the words are much shortened. The writing is peculiar and hard



to read ; but it gives some interesting statistics in regard to the place.

On reaching the end of my trip I called at once on the rector, who received me very kindly and offered to go with me to the church, which invitation I readily accepted. He expressed much interest in the New England towns bearing the name of Groton, and spoke of a visit made to the English town, a few years previously, by the Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, of Boston, which gave him great pleasure. We walked over the grounds of the old manor, once belonging to John Winthrop, first Governor of Massachusetts ; and Groton Place, the residence of the lord of the manor at that time, was pointed out, as well as a solitary mulberry-tree, which stood in Winthrop's garden, and is now the last vestige of the spot. In strolling over the grounds I picked up some acorns under an oak, which were afterward sent home to my father and planted here, but unfortunately they did not come up. I remember with special pleasure the attentions of Mr. R. F. Swan, who took me to a small school of little children, where the teacher told the scholars that I had come from another Groton across the broad ocean. He also kindly made for me a rough tracing of the part of the parish in which I was more particularly interested ; and as I had left the inn at Boxford when he called, he sent it by private hands to me at the Sudbury railway-station. All these little courtesies and many more I recollect with great distinctness, and they add much to the pleasant memories of my visit to the ancestral town, which has such a numerous progeny of municipal descendants in the United States.

Of this large family our town, now celebrating the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of its birth, is the eldest ; and as the " first-born, higher than the kings of the earth."

The next child in the order of descent is the town in Connecticut, — younger than this town by just half a century, and during the Revolution the scene of the heroic Ledyard's death. It was so named in the year 1705, during the Governorship of Fitz-John Winthrop, out of respect to the Suffolk home of the family. In population this is the largest of the

various towns bearing the name, and contains several thriving villages. It is situated on the east bank of the Thames River, in New London County.

The next town in age is the one in Grafton County, New Hampshire, which was originally granted by the Legislature of that State as early as July 3, 1761, under the name of Cockermouth, and re-granted on November 22, 1766; but the present name of Groton was not given until December 7, 1796. It was chosen by certain inhabitants of the place, who were connected either by birth or through kindred with this town. The population is small, and the principal pursuit of the people is farming, though there are eight or ten saw-mills within its limits. Mica is found in great abundance, and forms the basis of an important industry. There is a Spectacle Pond, lying partly within the town, of which the name may have gone from this neighborhood. There are two villages in the township, the one known as North Groton, perhaps the more important, and the other situated near the southerly border, and known as Groton. Between these two villages, in the centre of the territory, are the town-house, and an old burying-ground where fifteen years ago I examined many of the epitaphs and found a few family names that are still common here in our burying-ground.

The fourth child in the municipal family is the town of Groton, Caledonia County, Vermont, a pretty village lying in the Wells River valley, and chartered on October 20, 1789, though the earliest settlers were living there a few years before that date. The first child born in the town was Sally, daughter of Captain Edmund and Sally (Wesson) Morse, who began her earthly pilgrimage on September 2, 1787. The father was a native of our town, and principally through his influence the name of Groton was given to the home of his adoption among the foot-hills of the Green Mountains. Wells River runs through the township in a southeasterly direction, and with its tributaries affords some excellent water-power along its course. This stream rises in Groton Pond, a beautiful sheet of water, and empties into the

Connecticut at Wells River Junction, a railway centre of some importance.

My visit to the town was made on July 26, 1890, and while there I called on the Honorable Isaac Newton Hall, one of the oldest and most prominent citizens of the place, who kindly took me in his buggy through the village, pointing out by the way the various objects of public interest. The Methodist Episcopal Church, situated at one end of the village street, had some memorial windows, of which two had inscriptions, as follows: —

Capt · Edmund · Morse  
Born · Groton · Mass · 1764  
Died · Groton · Vt · 1843

---

Sally · Morse · Hill  
Born · 1787 — Died · 1864  
The · First · Person · Born · in · Groton

Before leaving the place I walked through the burying-ground and examined some of the epitaphs, but none of the names reminded me particularly of the parent town.

The next town of the name is Groton, Erie County, Ohio, which was settled about the year 1809. It was first called Wheatsborough, after a Mr. Wheats, who originally owned most of the township. It lies in the region known as the Fire Lands of Ohio, a tract of half a million acres given by the State of Connecticut in May, 1792, to those of her citizens who had suffered losses from the enemy during the Revolution. Like many other places in the neighborhood, the town took its name from the one in Connecticut.

Late in the autumn of 1889 I happened to be in Nashville, Tennessee, as a member of a committee on business connected with the Peabody Normal College in that city, of which ex-President Hayes was chairman. On telling him incidentally that I purposed on my return homeward to stop for a short time at Groton, Erie County, Ohio, he kindly invited me to make him a visit at his home in Fremont, which



was very near my objective point; and he said furthermore that he would accompany me on my trip to that town, which offer I readily accepted. On the morning of November 27 we left Fremont by rail for Norwalk, the shire town of Huron County, — a county in which the township of Groton formerly came, — where we alighted, and at once repaired to the rooms of the Firelands Historical Society. Here we were met by several gentlemen, prominent in the city as well as in the Historical Society, who showed us many attentions. We had an opportunity there to examine various objects of interest connected with the early history of that part of the State. Then taking the cars again on our return, we proceeded as far as Bellevue, where we left the train. Here at a livery-stable we engaged a buggy and a pair of horses, without knowing exactly to what part of the township I wished to go, as I was then told that there was no village of Groton, but only scattered farms throughout the town. One man, however, said that there was a place called Groton Centre, which seemed to me both very natural and familiar, and so thither we directed our course. After driving over very muddy roads for five or six miles, we inquired at a farm-house the way to Groton Centre, where we were told that a school-house in sight, half a mile off, was the desired place. There was no village whatever to be seen in any direction; and the building was the public voting-place, on which account the neighborhood received the name. The town is entirely agricultural in its character, and the land is largely prairie with a rich soil. It is small in population, and does not contain even a post-office. The inhabitants for their postal facilities depend on Bellevue and Sandusky, adjacent places.

Another town bearing the good name of Groton, which I have visited, is the one in Tompkins County, New York. More than eighteen years ago I found myself at Cortland, Cortland County, New York, where I had gone in order to see the venerable Mrs. Sarah Chaplin Rockwood, a native of this town. She was a daughter of the Reverend Dr. Chaplin, the last minister settled by the town, and at that time she was almost one hundred and two years old. By a coincidence

she was then living on Groton Avenue, a thoroughfare which leads to Groton, Tompkins County, a town ten miles distant. Taking advantage of my nearness to that place, on May 4, 1887, I drove there and was set down at the Groton Hotel, where I passed the night. Soon after my arrival I took a stroll through the village, and then called on Marvin Morse Baldwin, Esq., a lawyer of prominence, and the author of an historical sketch of the place, published in 1868. The town was formed originally, on April 7, 1817, from Locke, Cayuga County, under the name of Division; but during the next year this was changed to Groton, on the petition of the inhabitants, some of whom were from Groton, Massachusetts, and others from Groton, Connecticut. The principal village is situated on Owasco Inlet, a small stream, and is surrounded by a rolling country of great beauty. The population is small, and the business chiefly confined to a machine-shop and foundry, several carriage-shops, and the making of agricultural implements. The town supports a National Bank and also a weekly newspaper, and has railway communication with other places.

In all these visits to the several towns of the same name, I have interested myself to learn the local pronunciation of the word. I have asked many persons in all ranks of life and grades of society in regard to the matter, and without exception they have given it "Gráw-ton," which every "native here, and to the manner born" knows so well how to pronounce. It has never been Grōw-ton, or Gröt-ton even, but always with a broad sound on the first and accented syllable. Such was the old pronunciation in England, and by the continuity of custom and tradition the same has been kept up throughout the several settlements in this country bearing the name.

The latest town aspiring to the honor of the name of Groton is in Brown County, South Dakota. It was laid out about twenty-two years ago on land owned by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company. I have been informed that various New England names were selected by the Company and given to different townships along the line, not for personal or individual reasons, but because they

were short and well sounding, and unlike any others in the Territory of that period.

At some future day, if my life be spared long enough, I may pay my respects to this youngest child of the name and visit her township. In that case I will describe her personality and place her in the family group with her elder sisters.

During two centuries and a half, — the long period of time now under consideration, — many changes have taken place in the customs and manners of our people. Some of these are entirely forgotten, and traces of them are found only in the records of the past; and I purpose to allude to a few. In this way a survival of their knowledge may be kept up, which will help the present generation in some degree to catch the attitude of its ancestors.

In the early days of New England marriages were performed by magistrates only, and by other officers appointed for that particular purpose. It was many years before ministers of the Gospel were allowed to take part in the ceremony. At a town meeting held here, on December 15, 1669, the selectmen were authorized "to petition to the [General] Court for one to marry persons in our towne"; and it is probable that before this time persons wishing to be joined in wedlock were obliged either to go elsewhere in order to carry out their intention, or else a magistrate or other officer was brought for the occasion. At that period the population of the town was small, and the marriages were few in number; and before this date only eight couples are found as recorded of Groton. Perhaps these marriages were solemnized by a Commissioner of Small Causes, who was authorized equally with a magistrate to conduct the ceremony. These officers were empowered to act in all cases within the jurisdiction of a magistrate, and were approved, either by the Court of Assistants or the County Courts, on the request of any town where there was no resident magistrate. They were three in number in each of such towns, and were chosen by the freemen.

Another instance of a change in early customs is found in connection with funerals, which formerly were conducted with

severe simplicity. Our pious forefathers were opposed to all ecclesiastical rites, and any custom that reminded them of the English church met with their stern disapproval. And, furthermore, prayers over a corpse were very suggestive of those offered up for the dead by the Roman church; and to their minds such ceremonies savored strongly of heresy and superstition. A body was taken from the house to the grave, and interred without ceremony; and no religious services were held. Funeral prayers in New England were first made in the smaller towns before they were in the larger places. Their introduction into Boston was of so uncommon occurrence that it caused some comment in a newspaper, as the following extract from "The Boston Weekly News-Letter," December 31, 1730, will show:—

Yesterday were Buried here the Remains of that truly honourable & devout Gentlewoman, Mrs. SARAH BYFIELD, amidst the affectionate Respects & Lamentations of a numerous Concourse. — Before carrying out the Corpse, a Funeral Prayer was made, by one of the Pastors of the *Old Church*, to whose Communion she belong'd; which, tho' a Custom in the Country-Towns, is a singular Instance in this place, but it's wish'd may prove a leading Example to the general Practice of so christian & decent a Custom.

At a funeral the coffin was carried upon a bier to the place of interment by pall-bearers, who from time to time were relieved by others walking at their side. The bearers usually were kinsfolk or intimate friends of the deceased; and they were followed by the mourners and neighbors, who walked two by two. After the burial the bier was left standing over the grave ready for use when occasion should again require.

Many years ago an old citizen of this town told me that once he served as a pall-bearer at the funeral of a friend who died in Squannacook Village (West Groton). It took place near midsummer, in very hot weather; and he related how the procession was obliged to halt often in order to give a rest to the bearers, who were nearly prostrated by the heat during their long march.

Hearses were first introduced into Boston about 1796, and into Groton a few years later. In the warrant for the Groton town-meeting on April 4, 1803, Article No. 7 was

To see if the town will provide a herse for the town's use, and give such directions about the same as they shall think fit.

In the Proceedings of that meeting, after Article No. 7, it is recorded: —

Voted that the town will provide a herse for the Town's use.

Voted and chose James Brazer, Esq<sup>r</sup> Jacob L. Parker, and Joseph Sawtell 3<sup>d</sup> a Committee and directed them to provide a decent herse at the Town's expence.

From the earliest period of our Colonial history training-days were appointed by the General Court for the drilling of soldiers; and at intervals the companies used to come together as a regiment and practise various military exercises. From this custom sprang the regimental muster, so common before the War of the Rebellion.

During a long time, and particularly in the early part of the nineteenth century, many such musters were held here. A training-field often used for the purpose was the plain, situated near the Hollingsworth Paper-mills, a mile and a half northerly from the village. Sometimes they were held on the easterly side of the road, and at other times on the westerly side. During my boyhood musters took place, twice certainly, on the eastern slope of the hill on the south side of the Broad Meadow Road near Farmers' Row; and also, once certainly, in the field lying southeast of Lawrence Academy, near where Powder House Road now runs.

Musters have been held on land back of the late Charles Jacobs's house, and, in the autumn of 1850, in a field near the dwelling where Benjamin Moors used to live, close by James's Brook, in the south part of the town. The last one in Groton, or the neighborhood even, took place on September 13 and 14, 1852, and was held in the south part of the town, near the line of the Fitchburg Railroad on its northerly side, some distance east of the station. This was a muster of the Fifth



Regiment of Light Infantry, and occurred while Mr. Boutwell was Governor of the Commonwealth; and I remember well the reception which he gave to the officers on the intervening evening at his house, built during the preceding year.

Akin to the subject of military matters, was a custom which formerly prevailed in some parts of Massachusetts, and perhaps elsewhere, of celebrating occasionally the anniversary of the surrender of Yorktown, which falls on October 17. Such a celebration was called a "Cornwallis"; and it was intended to represent, in a burlesque manner, the siege of the town, as well as the ceremony of its surrender. The most prominent generals on each side would be personated, while the men of the two armies would wear what was supposed to be their peculiar uniform. I can recall now more than one such sham fight that took place in this town during my boyhood. In 10 Cushing, 252, is to be found a decision of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, enjoining a town treasurer from paying money that had been appropriated for such a celebration.

James Russell Lowell, in his Glossary to "The Biglow Papers," thus defines the word: "Cornwallis, *a sort of muster in masquerade*; supposed to have had its origin soon after the Revolution, and to commemorate the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. It took the place of the old Guy Fawkes procession." Speaking in the character of Hosea Biglow, he asks,

Recollect wut fun we hed, you 'n' I an' Ezry Hollis  
Up there to Waltham plain last fall, along o' the Cornwallis?

He further says in a note: "i hait the Sight of a feller with a muskit as I du pizn But their *is* fun to a cornwallis I aint agoin' to deny it."

The last Cornwallis in this immediate neighborhood came off about sixty years ago at Pepperell; and I remember witnessing it. Another Cornwallis on a large scale occurred at Clinton in the year 1853, in which nine uniformed companies of militia, including the Groton Artillery, took part. On this occasion the burlesque display, both in numbers and details, far outshone all former attempts of a similar character, and,

like the song of the swan, ended a custom that had come down from a previous century. At the present day nothing is left of this quaint celebration but a faded memory and an uncertain tradition.

The first settlers of Massachusetts brought with them from England a good supply of seeds and stones of various fruits, grains, and vegetables, which were duly planted. In this way was begun the cultivation of apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries, wheat, rye, barley, oats, beans, peas, potatoes, hops, currants, etc., and in the course of a few years they raised fair crops of all these products.

As early as 1660 all inn-holders and tavern-keepers were required to have a license in order to be allowed to carry on their business; and they were obliged to be approbated by the selectmen of the town and to be licensed by the County Court. At the same time a restriction was placed on makers of cider, who were not allowed to sell by retail, except under certain conditions; "and that it be only to masters of families of good and honest report, or persons going to Sea, and they suffer not any person to drink the same in their houses, cellars or yards." This reference, found in "The Book of the General Lawes and Libertyes" (Cambridge, 1660), shows that at an early date in the history of the Colony the prohibitory principle was recognized by legislative enactment, and that it is by no means a modern idea. The reference shows furthermore that cider was made by the settlers at an early period. Few persons of the rising generation are aware of the great quantities of cider made fifty or seventy-five years ago on almost every farm in an agricultural community. I am placing the estimate within moderate bounds when I say that every good-sized farm in Groton had an apple orchard and a cider mill on the premises. Many a farmer would make all the way from ten to thirty barrels of cider for home use, besides what he would sell elsewhere or make into vinegar; and this large stock was kept in the cellar. There are now in this audience men and women who remember how years ago they used to suck sweet cider through a long rye straw, as it ran from the press. At such times the children were

often as thick as honey bees round the bung-hole of a hogs-head of molasses in summer time.

Many plants were brought originally to New England from other countries for their medicinal virtues, and many were introduced by chance. Some have multiplied so rapidly and grown so plentifully in the fields and by the roadside, that they are now considered common weeds. Wormwood, tansy, chamomile, yarrow, dandelion, burdock, plantain, catnip, and mint all came here by importation. These exotic plants made their way into the interior, as fast as civilization extended in that direction; though in some instances the seeds may have been carried by birds in their flight.

Dr. William Douglass, in "A Summary, Historical and Political, of the first Planting, progressive Improvements, and present State of the British Settlements in North America," published at Boston (Volume I. in the year 1749, and Volume II. in 1753), says:—

Near *Boston* and other great Towns, some Field Plants which accidentally have been imported from Europe, spread much, and are a great Nuisance in Pastures, . . . at present they have spread Inland from *Boston*, about 30 Miles (II. 207).

According to this statement, the pioneers of some of these foreign plants or weeds had already reached the township of Groton near the middle of the eighteenth century. Dr. Douglass gives another fact about the town which may be worthy of preservation, as follows:—

There are some actual Surveys of Extents which ought not to be lost in Oblivion; as for Instance, from *Merrimack* River due West to *Groton* Meeting-House are 12 miles; from *Groton* Meeting House (as surveyed by Col. *Stoddard*, Major *Fulham*, and Mr. *Dwight*, by Order of the General Assembly) to Northfield Meeting-House W. 16 d. N. by Compass, are 41 Miles and half (I. 425 note).

Such surveys, as those given in this extract, were of more interest to the public, before the days of railroads, than they are now; but, as the author says, they "ought not to be lost in Oblivion."

The greatest advance in social and moral life during the



last one hundred and twenty-five years has been in the cause of temperance. Soon after the period of the Revolution there arose an abuse of spirituous liquors, perhaps induced in part by the return home of young men from the army, who while absent had acquired the habit of drinking to excess. There was no public occasion, from a wedding to a funeral, or from the ordination of a minister to the raising of a house or barn, when rum in its many Protean shapes was not given out. It was set on the festive sideboard, and used freely both by the old and young; and sometimes even the pastor of the church yielded to the insidious seduction of the stimulant. Liquors were sold at retail at most of the trading shops in town, and at the three taverns in the village. The late Elizur Wright, an eminent statistician, and nearly eighty years ago a resident of Groton, once told me in writing that, according to an estimate made by him at that period, the amount of New England rum sold here in one year was somewhat over 28,000 gallons. This was not a guess on his part, but was taken from the books of dealers in the fluid, who had kindly complied with his request for the amount of their sales during the previous year. We judge of the whole from the specimen.

It is generally supposed that the huge department stores in the large cities are a modern institution, so far as they relate to the variety of articles sold; but in this respect they are only an imitation of the country store. Fifty years ago the average trading shop kept about everything that was sold, from a pin to a plough, from silks and satins to stoves and shovels, and from tea and coffee to tin dippers and cotton drilling, flour, all kinds of dry-goods and groceries, molasses, raisins, bricks, cheese, hats, nails, sperm oil, grindstones, boots and shoes, drugs and medicines, to say nothing of a supply of confectionery for children; besides a daily barter of any of the aforesaid articles for fresh eggs and butter. The traders were omnivorous in their dealings, and they kept on hand nearly everything that was asked for by the customers. In this respect they have set an example to the proprietors of department stores, who offer for sale an equally miscellaneous assortment of goods.

Within the last three-quarters of a century, perhaps the most useful invention given to mankind, certainly one very widely used, has been the common friction match. Apparently it is so trifling and inconspicuous that among the great discoveries of the nineteenth century it is likely to be overlooked. This little article is so cheap that no hovel or hamlet throughout Christendom is ever without it, and yet so useful that it is found in every house or mansion, no matter how palatial, and in every vessel that sails the sea. Bunches of matches are made by the millions and millions, and broad acres of forests are cut down each year to supply the wood; and in every home they are used without regard to waste or economy. "No correct statistics of match making can be given, but it has been estimated that six matches a day for each individual of the population of Europe and North America is the average consumption." (The American Cyclopædia, New York, 1883.) Perhaps no other invention of the last century comes so nearly in touch with the family and household in all parts of the civilized world as this necessity of domestic life.

I have mentioned these facts in some detail as the friction match has had such a close connection with country life in New England, as elsewhere. In early days when fire was kept on the domestic hearth, from month to month and from year to year, by covering up live coals with ashes, sometimes from one cause or another it would go out; and then it was necessary to visit a neighbor to "borrow fire," as the expression was. If the distance was short, live coals might be brought on a shovel; but if too far, a lighted candle could be carried in a tin lantern and furnish the needed flame. Often a flint-and-steel was used for striking fire, but sometimes even this useful article was wanting. I have heard of instances where a man would fire off a gun into a wad of tow and set it on fire, and thus get the desired spark to start the blaze.

Another invention, which has come into general use within the last sixty years, and has changed the destinies of the world, is Morse's electric telegraph. In the sending of mes-

sages it practically annihilates space, and has worked wonders in science and in the every-day affairs of life. By means of it the words of Puck become a reality when he says:

I 'll put a girdle round about the Earth  
In forty minutes.

If the ocean telegraph had been in operation at that time, the battle of New Orleans, on January 8, 1815, would not have been fought. It took place a fortnight after the treaty of peace had been signed at Ghent, though the tidings of the treaty were not received in this country until a month after the action. The chances are that Andrew Jackson would never have been President of the United States if he had not gained that battle; nor would Martin Van Buren have succeeded to the same high office if as Secretary of State or as Vice-President he had not been associated with Jackson. This will serve as an illustration of the influence which the telegraph may have on human affairs.

Little short of fifty years ago I spent an evening with Professor Morse at his rooms in Paris, and he told me a thrilling tale of the circumstances which led up to his great discovery of the application of electricity to the sending of messages; and how the thought first came to him many years before, when in a packet ship on the voyage from Havre to New York. I have often regretted that I did not write down at once my recollections of the visit, while they were fresh in my memory; but unfortunately I did not do so.

A telegraph office in this village was opened on Saturday, March 20, 1880, and the first message along its wires was sent to Nashua, New Hampshire. The office was in the railway station, where it has since remained.

The telephone office here was first opened on Friday, April 29, 1881, in the building at the south corner of Main Street and Station Avenue, where it still remains; and there are now more than one hundred and twenty subscribers.

By the side of the investigations connected with this address I am reminded that the First Parish Meeting-house is now one hundred and fifty years old. During one half of this

period it was the only designated place of worship within the limits of the town; and for these seventy-five years it was the centre of the religious life of the people. From its walls went forth all the efforts that made for the highest and noblest activities of human nature. It was the fourth meeting-house used by the town, and stands on the site of the third building, a spot which was by no means the unanimous choice of the town when that structure was built; and the usual controversy then took place over the site. It was begun in 1714, and was two years in process of building. In early times there was always much contention in regard to the local position of the house, some wanting it put in one place, and others in another, according to the convenience of their respective families. Mr. Butler, in his *History of Groton*, says: "But the momentous affairs of deciding upon a spot on which to set a public building, and choosing and settling a minister, are not usually accomplished without much strife and contention, and are sometimes attended with long and furious quarrels and expensive lawsuits" (page 306). The Reverend Joseph Emerson, the first minister of Groton West Parish, now known as Pepperell, explains the cause thus: "It hath been observed that some of the hottest contentions in this land hath been about settling of ministers and building meeting-houses; and what is the reason? The devil is a great enemy to settling ministers and building meeting-houses; wherefore he sets on his own children to work and make difficulties, and to the utmost of his power stirs up the corruptions of the children of God in some way to oppose or obstruct so good a work."

With no desire to dispute Mr. Emerson's theory in regard to the matter, I think that the present generation would hardly accept his explanation as the correct one.

For some months, perhaps for one or two years, before the present house of worship was built, the question of a new structure was considered and discussed at town-meetings. It was then in the air, and finally the matter took concrete shape. On May 6, 1754, the town made definite plans for a raising of the frame; and on such occasions at that period of time rum

was supposed to be needed, not only to bring together a crowd to help along the work, but also to give strength to the workers. At that meeting the following vote was passed: —

at a Legal meeting of the Inhabitants at Groton qualleyfied by Law for voting in Town affairs assembled Chose Cap<sup>t</sup> bancroft moderator for s<sup>d</sup> meeting

The question was put which way they would face the meetinghouse and the major vote was for facing s<sup>d</sup> house to the west

Voted that The meeting house Com<sup>tee</sup> provide one hogshead of Rum one Loaf of white Shuger one quarter of a hundread of brown Shugar also voted that Deacon Stone Deacon farwell Lt Isaac woods benje Stone Lt John Woods Cap<sup>t</sup> Sam<sup>l</sup> Tarbell Amos Lawrence Ensign Obadiah Parker Cap<sup>t</sup> bancroft be a Com<sup>tee</sup> and to provide Victuals and Drink for a hundread men and If the people Dont subscribe anough then the Com<sup>tee</sup> to purchas the Remainder up on the Towns Cost.

Voted that The Com<sup>tee</sup> that Got the Timber for The meeting house haue Liberty with such as shall subscribe thear to to build a porch at the front Dore of the meeting house up on their own Cost

Then voted that the Select men provide some Conuiant place to meet in upon the Sabbath Till further order.

According to Joseph Farwell's note-book the raising took place on May 22, 1754, — which day fell on Wednesday, — and lasted until Saturday, May 25. It is to be hoped that during these three days no accident happened on account of the liquid stimulant. Probably the work on the building was pushed with all the speed then possible and available; and, probably too, it was used for worship long before it was finished. During this period of interruption in the public services it is very likely that the Sunday meetings were held at the house of the minister, Mr. Trowbridge, who then lived on the site of the High School building.

According to Farwell's note-book, on August 18, 1754, Mrs. Sarah Dickinson became a member of the church, the first person so admitted in the new meeting-house. She was the widow of James Dickinson, who had died only a few weeks before, and was buried in the old graveyard. According to the same authority, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper



was administered in the new building for the first time on November 15, 1754.

The early settlers did not believe much in outward ceremony; and the new meeting-house was never formally dedicated by a special service. Perhaps, when the house was first opened for worship, Mr. Trowbridge preached a sermon in keeping with the occasion; and very likely in his prayer he made some allusion to the event. We are told that the prayer of the righteous man availeth much. The homage paid to the Creator of the universe each Sunday, both by the pulpit and the pews, would consecrate any such structure to its high purpose. Simple in their religious faith, the worshippers had no use for ecclesiastical forms. Not alone by their words, but by their thoughts, they dedicated the meeting-house. Sometimes words not spoken have more meaning than those which are uttered.

The Common, in front of the present meeting-house, was a place closely connected with the life of the town. Here at an early period the two militia companies used to meet and drill at regular times, known as training-days. On the Common the two companies of minute-men rallied on the morning of that eventful nineteenth of April, and received their ammunition from the town's stock, which was stored in the Powder-House near by. Here they took farewell of friends and families, knowing full well the responsible duties that rested on their shoulders, and the dangers that threatened them. These men marched hence on that memorable day as British subjects, but they came back as independent citizens who never knew again the authority of a king.

In that house Mr. Dana, a young and rising lawyer of Groton, pronounced a eulogy on General Washington, which was delivered on Saturday, February 22, 1800, a few weeks after his death. The military companies of the town attended the exercises. Miss Elizabeth Farnsworth (1791-1884) and Mrs. Sarah (Capell) Gilson (1793-1890) as little girls were present on the occasion, and they both gave me their faint recollections of the day.

The meeting-house was remodelled in the year 1839,



when it was partially turned round, and the north end of the building made the front, facing the west, as it now stands. Formerly the road to the easterly part of the town went diagonally across the Common, and passed down the hill to the south of the meeting-house; and there was no highway on the north side. Before this change in the building was made, the town-meetings were always held in the body of the house; and the voting was done in front of the pulpit. In my mind's eye I can see now the old pulpit, with the sounding-board hanging overhead.

The town-clock in the steeple, so familiar to every man, woman, and child in Groton, was made by James Ridgway, and placed in the tower some time during the spring of 1809. It was paid for in part by the town, and in part by private subscription. Mr. Ridgway was a silversmith and a clock-maker, who during the war with England (1812-1815) carried on a large business in this neighborhood. He afterward removed to Keene, New Hampshire, where he lived for many years. His shop was situated on Main Street, nearly opposite to the Groton Inn, but it disappeared a long time ago.

The bell of the meeting-house was cast in the year 1819 by Revere and Son, Boston, and, according to the inscription, weighs 1128 pounds.

On this interesting occasion we are all glad to have present with us the venerable Zara Patch, a native of Groton and the oldest inhabitant of the town. His ancestry in both branches of the family runs back nearly to the beginning of the settlement, and in his person is represented some of the best blood of old Groton stock; and we welcome him at this time. He is the last survivor of nineteen citizens who signed the call for the due observance of the bi-centennial anniversary, on October 31, 1855, which was issued in the preceding May.

Fifty years ago the town had a celebration of the two-hundredth anniversary of its settlement, similar to the one we are now holding. On that occasion Governor Boutwell was President of the day, and the Reverend Arthur Buckminster Fuller, a younger brother of Margaret Fuller, — of a

family once resident here, — made the historical address, which was delivered in the Congregational Meeting-house. Colonel Eusebius Silsby Clark, who lost his life in the War of the Rebellion, at Winchester, Virginia, on October 17, 1864, was the Chief Marshal. Of his six aids on that day John Warren Parker and myself are the sole survivors, and the only representatives of those who had an official connection with the exercises; and now we are left the last two leaves on the branch. At that celebration Mr. Parker was also one of the Committee of Arrangements; and we are all glad to see him present on this occasion.

Groton is a small town, but there are those who love her and cherish her good name and fame. She has been the mother of many a brave son and many a fair daughter, dutiful children who through generations "arise up and call her blessed." She is the Mount Zion of a large household. Of her numerous family, from the nursling to the aged, by her example she has spared no pains to make them useful citizens and worthy members of society. In former years she was relatively a much more important town than she is now. At the time of the first national census in 1790, in population Groton was the second town in Middlesex County, Cambridge alone surpassing it. In order to learn the true value of some communities, and to give the inhabitants of Groton their proper rank, they should be weighed and not counted; and by this standard it would be found that the town has not been lessened even in relative importance. Bigness and greatness are not synonymous words, and in their meaning there is much difference between them. In all our thoughts and deeds, let us do as well by the town as she has done by us.

Fellow Townsmen and Neighbors, — the stint you set me is now done. On my part it has proved to be not a task, but a labor of love. If anything that I may have said should spur others to study the history of an old town that was typical of life among plain folk in the early days of New England, and one that has left an honorable record during the various periods of its existence, my aim will have been reached.

## APPENDIX.

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### *The Name of Groton.*

I AM indebted to the courtesy of Dr. Edward Mussey Hartwell for the following paper on the origin of the name of Groton. From any other source I could not have obtained such a scholarly essay on the subject; and it places me under great obligations to him. Dr. Hartwell passed his boyhood in Littleton, where his father's family belonged; and he fitted for college mostly at Lawrence Academy, so that he has inherited an historical interest in the neighborhood.

STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.  
BOSTON, July 3, 1905.

HON. SAMUEL A. GREEN, Librarian,  
Massachusetts Historical Society.

DEAR DR. GREEN, — What follows contains the gist of my notes on Groton. For the sake of conciseness and brevity, I forbear (1) from fully describing the sources whence my citations are derived, and (2) from quotation of authorities regarding the linguistic affinities of the components of the word Groton. However, I may say that, I can support every statement by documentary evidence that seems conclusive to me.

Groton occurs as a place name both in England and the United States. Groton in England, which is situated in the County of Suffolk, appears to be a small parish of some 1560 acres, of which 39 are in common. The "Dictionnaire des Bureaux de Poste" published at Berne in 1895, gives six post-offices in various parts of the United States having the name of Groton. Two of them, viz., Groton, Massachusetts, and Groton, Connecticut, date from Colonial times, i.e., from 1655 and 1705 respectively, and numbered among their original grantees or proprietors members of the Winthrop family whose ancestral seat was Groton in the Babenberg Hundred, County Suffolk, England, whence it is reasonable to suppose all Grotons in this country have derived their name. Among them Groton, Mass., is the most

ancient. The name (spelt *Groaten*) appears in a vote of the General Court dated May 29, 1655, to grant a new plantation at Petapawag to Mr. Deane Winthrop and others. In later records of the General Court, e. g., May 26, 1658, the form *Groten* appears; and in the same records under date of November 12, 1659, both *Groten* and *Groaten* appear.

The Manor of Groton in Babenberg Hundred in the Liberty of St. Edmund and the County of Suffolk, England, according to the Domesday Book (1086) belonged to the Abbey of Bury of St. Edmund's in the time of Edward the Confessor (1042-1065). In 1544 the request of Adam Wynthorpe to purchase "the Farm of the Manor of Groton (Suffolk) late of the Monastery of Bury St. Edmund's" was granted by Henry VIII. (into whose hands it had come when the monasteries were suppressed) for the sum of £408. 18s. 3d. Governor John Winthrop, grandson of Adam Wynthorpe, was Lord of the Manor of Groton in 1618. In 1630 or 1631 he sold his interest therein for £4,200. I find the name of this manor spelt variously at different times as follows:

1. *Grotena* (a) in Domesday Book in 1086.  
                   (b) in Jocelin de Brakelond's Chronicle in 1200.  
                   (c) in the Hundred Rolls in 1277.
2. *Grotene* (a) in Joc. de Brakelond about 1200.  
                   (b) in the Patent Rolls, 1291 and 1298.
3. *Grotona* in Joc. de Brakelond about 1200.
4. *Grotone* (a) in Joc. de Brakelond about 1200.  
                   (b) in the Patent Rolls in 1423.  
                   (c) in Dugdale's citation of a MS. of 1533.
5. *Groton* (a) in Dugdale's citation of a MS. of 14th Century.  
                   (b) in Records of the Augmentation Office, 1541 and 1544.

Jocelin de Brakelond was a monk of Bury St. Edmund's who, as Chaplain of the Abbot, wrote the Chronicle which bears his name. It covers the period 1173-1203, i. e., the incumbency of Abbot Samson. The frequent mention of Groton in this Chronicle, written just at the beginning of the thirteenth century, may be accounted for by the fact that the Abbey and certain claimants named de Cokefeld had a law-suit over lands at Groton.

Since 1541 Groton appears to have been the form of the name of the English manor, parish or hamlet. It may be remarked: (1) that "de Grotena" is found as a personal name in the Hundred Rolls,

1297 ; and "de Grotton" in the Scotch Rolls, 1327 ; while a holding named Grotton, "late of the Monastery of Delacres in Staffordshire" is mentioned in the records of the Augmentation Office, 1547 ; and Grotton, a railway station in Lancashire, is mentioned in a "Comprehensive Gazetteer of England and Wales," a recent but undated work.

The Latinized "in Grotena" and "Grotenam" of the Domesday Book give rise to the suggestion that *Groten* has the force of an adjective (meaning gravelly, gritty, stony or sandy), which served to characterize a tract of land, or perhaps a hill, a pit, a ham, or a ton. I take *grot* to be one form of the Old English *greót*, *grut* (Middle English, *greet*, *gret*, and Modern English, *grit*), meaning gravel.

The following is a series of forms in which variants of *greót* seem to have an adjectival force :

- (1) *Greotan* edescas lond, relating to land in Kent, in a charter dated 822. Possibly *greotan* may stand for *greatan*, meaning big.
- (2) *Gretenlinkes*, in Hampshire, in a land charter of 966.
- (3) *Gretindun* (later *Gretton* in Dorsetshire), mentioned in a charter of 1019.
- (4) *Gretenhowe*, the name of *Gretna* in Scotland, in 1376.
- (5) *Grotintune*, a manor in Shropshire, Domesday Book, 1086.
- (6) *Gratenton* (?), a manor in Berkshire, Domesday Book, 1086.

On the other hand, the form *Greotan* may be the dative plural of *greot* (for *greotum* ?) used in a locative sense "at the gravels," since *Gravelai* and *Gravelei* occur as place names in Domesday Book and *Gravell* occurs in the Hundred Rolls, temp. Edw. I.

The following scheme, derived from various standard lexicons, exhibits the etymological affinities of *Greot* (*grit*) :

	<i>Old</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Modern</i>
<i>Saxon</i>	<i>Griot</i> , <i>griet</i> , <i>greot</i> ,	cf. English and Ger- man,	cf. English, German and Norse.
<i>English</i>	<i>Greót</i> , <i>grut</i> , <i>grot</i> ,	<i>Greót</i> , <i>Greet</i> , <i>grit</i> , <i>gryt</i> , <i>gret</i> ,	<i>Grit</i> , <i>grot</i> , <i>grout</i> .
<i>High German</i>	<i>Grioz</i> ,	<i>Griesz</i> ,	<i>Gries</i> , <i>Gruse</i> , <i>Graus</i> .
<i>Norse :</i>			
<i>Icelandic</i>	<i>Grjót</i> ( <i>griot</i> ),	<i>Grjót</i> ,	<i>Grjot</i> , <i>Gryttin</i> .
<i>Danish</i> and			
<i>Norwegian</i>	<i>Grjót</i> ,	<i>Grjót</i> , <i>Gryt(e)</i> ,	<i>Gruus</i> , <i>Grus</i> , <i>Gryttin</i> .
<i>Swedish</i>			<i>Grus</i> , <i>Grytt</i> .
<i>Old Frisian</i>	<i>gret</i> .		
<i>Low German</i>	<i>grott</i> .		

*Grot*, for *grébt*, appears to be an old and rather rare form. It should be stated that British place (and personal) names having *Gret* are much more numerous than those having *Grot* in the first syllable. Gretton is the name of several manors mentioned in Domesday, e. g., the present Girton (formerly called Gritton) (cf. Girton College), near Cambridge (Cambs.) and Gretton in Northamptonshire, still called Gretton. The last was Gretton (gryttune in 1060), Greton in 1086, Gretton in 1277, 1678, and 1895.

Other forms besides Gretton are : Gret-á = Gritwater, a stream in Cumberland, cf. Greta-marsc (= Grit-water-marsh?), 821 ; Greta-bridge = Gritwater bridge, Gret-ford, Gret-ham, Gret-land, Gret-well. Southey, the poet, lived at Greta Hall.

Gretá river in Cumberland had its counterpart in *Grjóta*, in the eleventh century in Iceland, translated Gritwater by Dasent in "*The Burnt Nial*." Gryttnbakki = Gravel hill or Gravel bank, is the name of (1) a modern post-office in Iceland and (2) another in Denmark. Grytten is a place name of today in Norway.

The Icelandic (Old Norse) *Grjót-garth* meant stone fence. Akin to *garth* (gard) are the Norwegian *gaard* and Swedish *gård*, a landed estate or homestead ; and the English Cloister-garth, yard, garden, and orchard (ort-geard).

Ton in Groton, Boston, etc., is related to M. E. Ton (Tone), O. E. tun, tune, O. Norse tún, O. Frisian tún, O. H. German taun, and German zaun, a hedge or fence. Ton and tun originally meaning an enclosing hedge or fence, meant also, field, yard, manor, hamlet, village and town or city.

Garth (yard) presents a parallel series of similar meanings, e. g., O. Norse for Constantinople was Myckel-gaard, i. e., the Great City.

I think that Groton stands for Grot-ton (cf. Gretton, Grit-ton) and is practically equivalent to the Icelandic Grjót-garth, and that your suggestion in 1876 as to the meaning of Groton was a happy one. *Floreat Grotena !*

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD M. HARTWELL.

### *Bi-centennial Celebration.*

The following extracts from the town-records relate to the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Groton, which took place fifty years ago. They



have never yet been printed, but are given here, as they have a certain connection with the celebration recently held. With the exception of the Reverend Edwin A. Bulkley, every man whose name is mentioned in these extracts is now dead, showing the ravages which half a century may bring about.



In the warrant for the Town Meeting, November 13, 1854, Article 2 is as follows: —

To see if the town will take any measures to notice or celebrate the Two Hundredth anniversary since the settlement of the town of Groton in the year 1655 or pass any vote in relation to the same.

(p. 389.)

In the proceedings of the meeting it is recorded that: —

The subject matter of this article [2] was referred to the following committee with instructions to report at a future meeting.

Stuart J. Park	Jacob Pollard
Josiah Bigelow	Abel Tarbell
Wm. Shattuck	Joseph Sanderson
Willard Torrey	Calvin Blood
Norman Shattuck	Joseph Brown
John Pingree	Silas Nutting
Elnathan Brown	Joseph Rugg
Charles Prescott	Charles A. Hutson

(p. 392.)

Proceedings at the Town Meeting, March 5, 1855: —

The committee chosen in Nov. last upon the Article "To see if the town will take any measures to notice or celebrate the two hun-

dredth anniversary since the settlement of the town of Groton in the year 1655 or pass any vote in relation to the same" have attended to that duty and submit the following Report :

That there are eras or waymarks in the history of a people which it well becomes them to notice or celebrate, and such we consider the approaching anniversary of the incorporation of this town, and would therefore recommend to the town to celebrate said anniversary with becoming festivities, and that a committee be chosen to take the whole subject into consideration and report at the next April meeting a plan or mode of celebrating said anniversary.

Josiah Bigelow	Stuart J. Park
Joseph Rugg	Wm. Shattuck
Norman Shattuck	Willard Torrey
	Silas Nutting

(p. 403.)

The above report was accepted and the following gentlemen were chosen a committee to report a plan or mode of celebrating said anniversary at the next April meeting.

Geo. S. Boutwell	Josiah Bigelow
Rev. David Fosdick	David Lakin
B. Russell	Dr. George Stearns
S. J. Park	Norman Smith
Peter Nutting	Daniel Needham
Nathl. Stone	Rev. Daniel Butler
B. P. Dix	John Spaulding
Rev. Crawford Nightingale	Curtis Lawrence
„ E. A. Bulkley	Geo. W. Bancroft
„ George E. Tucker	J. F. Hall, Jr.
„ [John M.] Chick	Noah Shattuck
George F. Farley	Joshua Gilson
Calvin Fletcher	P. G. Prescott
Abel Tarbell	J. G. Park
Walter Shattuck	Wm. Shattuck

(p. 403.)

Proceedings at the Town Meeting, April 2, 1855: —

*Voted*, That the report of the Committee on the second Centennial Anniversary celebration be accepted and placed on file, also chose the following persons a committee to make preparations and arrange-

ments for the celebration as mentioned in said report with discretionary powers as to the same, to wit.

Geo. F. Farley	}	General Committee
Joshua Green		
S. J. Park		
Geo. S. Boutwell		
David Fosdick, Jr.		

District No. 1.	Henry A. Bancroft	District No. 9.	Thos. Hutchins
"	2. Curtis Lawrence	"	10. Rufus Moors
"	3. Josiah Bigelow	"	11. John Pingree
"	4. Edmund Blood	"	12. Nathl Stone
"	5. Wm. Shattuck	"	13. E. D. Derby
"	6. Solomon Story	"	14. S. W. Rowe
"	7. Reuben Lewis	"	15. Ch's. Prescott
"	8. Calvin Blood	"	16. Allen Blood

(p. 407.)

Many years ago I obtained the letters and other manuscripts, together with the printed circulars, connected with the Bi-centennial Celebration; and I have had them carefully arranged, bound in a volume, and placed in the Library of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

### *List of Indian Words.*

The following Indian names, applied by the early settlers to streams, ponds, or places, in the original township of Groton and neighborhood, for the most part are still in common use. The spelling of these words varies, as at first they were written according to their sound and not according to their derivation. In the absence of any correct standard either of spelling or pronunciation, which always characterizes an unwritten language, the words have become so twisted and distorted that much of their original meaning is lost; but their root generally remains. It is rare to find an Indian word in an early document spelled twice alike. In the lapse of time these verbal changes have been so great that a native would hardly recognize any of them by sound. Even with all these drawbacks such words now furnish one of

the few links in a chain of historical facts connecting modern times with the prehistoric period of New England. As the shards that lie scattered around the site of old Indian dwellings are eagerly picked up by the archæologist for critical examination, so these isolated facts about place-names are worth saving by the antiquary for their philological value. "Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost."

*Babbittasset* — formerly the name of a village in Pepperell, now included in East Pepperell.

*Baddacook* — a pond in the eastern part of the town.

*Catacoonamug* — a stream in Shirley, which empties into the Nashua.

*Chicopee* — a district in the northerly part of the town, and applied to the highway approaching it, called Chicopee Row.

*Humhaiv* — a brook in Westford.

*Kissacook* — a hill in Westford.

*Massapoag* — a pond lying partly in Groton and partly in Dunstable.

*Mulpus* — a brook in Shirley.

*Nagog* — a pond in Littleton.

*Nashoba* — the old name of the Praying Indian village in Littleton, now applied to a hill in that town as well as to a brook in Westford.

*Nashua* — a river running through the township, and emptying into the Merrimack.

*Naumox* — a district, near the Longley monument, lying west of the East Pepperell road; said to have been the name of an Indian chief.

*Nissitisset* — applied to the neighborhood of Hollis, New Hampshire, and to a river and a hill in Pepperell.

*Nonacoicus* — a brook in Ayer, though formerly the name was applied to a tract of land in the southerly part of Groton, and is shortened often to Coicus.

*Nubanussuck* — a pond in Westford.

*Petaupaukett* — a name found in the original petition to the General Court for the grant of the town, and used in connection with the territory of the neighborhood; sometimes written Petapawage and Petapaway.

*Quosoponagon* — a meadow "on the other side of the river," mentioned in the land-grant of Thomas Tarbell, Jr.; the same word as Quasaponikin, formerly the name of a tract of land in Lancaster, but now given to a meadow and a hill in that town, where it is often contracted into Ponikin.

*Shabikin*, or more commonly *Shabōkin*, applied to a district in Harvard, bordering on the Nashua, below Still River village.

*Squannacook* — a river in the western part of the town flowing into the Nashua; a name formerly applied to the village of West Groton.

*Tadmuck* — a brook and a meadow in Westford.

*Unquetenasset*, or *Unquetenorset* — a brook in the northerly part of the town; often shortened into Unquety.

*Waubansconett* — another word found in the original petition for the grant of the town, and used in connection with the territory of the neighborhood.

### *List of Towns*

established in the two Colonies, before the township of Groton was granted in 1655, together with the year when they are first mentioned in the records of the General Court.

#### PLYMOUTH COLONY.

1	1620	Plymouth	7	1639	Taunton
2	1633	Scituate	8	1641	Marshfield
3	1637	Duxbury	9	1643	Eastham
4	1638	Barnstable	10	1645	Rehoboth
5	"	Sandwich	11	1652	Dartmouth
6	1639	Yarmouth			

#### MASSACHUSETTS-BAY COLONY.

1	1630	Charlestown	19	1640	Braintree
2	"	Salem	20	"	Salisbury
3	"	Boston	21	1641	Haverhill
4	"	Dorchester	22	"	Springfield
5	"	Watertown	23	1642	Gloucester
6	"	Medford	24	"	Woburn
7	"	Roxbury	25	1643	Wenham
8	1631	Lynn	26	1644	Hull
9	"	Cambridge	27	"	Reading
10	1633	Marblehead	28	1645	Manchester
11	1634	Ipswich	29	1646	Andover
12	1635	Newbury	30	1648	Topsfield
13	"	Hingham	31	1649	Malden
14	"	Weymouth	32	1650	Medfield
15	"	Concord	33	1653	Lancaster
16	1636	Dedham	34	May, 1655	Groton
17	1639	Rowley	35	" "	Billerica
18	"	Sudbury	36	" "	Chelmsford

### *Trees from England.*

Last September I wrote to the Reverend John W. Wayman, rector of the Groton Parish in England, and through his courtesy I procured several young elms and some acorns and beechnuts from the mother town. During the winter Professor Charles S. Sargent, who is at the head of the

Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, kindly took charge of the trees; and he also planted the acorns and nuts which came up in the spring. These trees and saplings have been set out temporarily on my land, and in due time, when of suitable size, they will be transplanted in some public place. It is hoped that they will foster and keep alive an interest between the two towns which are connected by sentiment, though separated in age by centuries and in distance by thousands of miles.



*First Parish Meeting-house.*

This cut was taken from a drawing made in the year 1838 by John Warner Barber, and originally appeared in his *Historical Collections of Massachusetts* (Worcester, 1839). It represents the First Parish Meeting-house before it was remodelled in 1839, when it was partially turned round, and the north end made the front, facing the west. The Academy building, on the right of the Meeting-house, was enlarged in the autumn of 1846, and afterward burned on July 4, 1868. The fence now around the Common in front of the Meeting-house was built in the autumn of 1842, the last post being placed at the northwest corner on October 3 of that year. The trees within the enclosure were set out about the same time, excepting the row of elms along Main Street, which were transplanted in 1828.













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